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introduce it into a landscape painted from nature—why rather a head!

There are minor works which deserve brief mention. Lawrence's crayon portraits are masterly and brilliant in execution, and strongly individual in expression, but mannered in the extreme. The limning is painfully dexterous, and there are certain systematic errors in drawing, which speak poorly for the artist's thoroughness. Note for example, the angle of the brow and nose on the shadowed side of the faces of all three of his heads, Nos. 243, 253, 254. It cuts into what should be the true position of the bridge of the nose so far, that if true of the individual, it would be a deformity, and the angle in the three is the same. There is a delicate portrait drawing by Hicks, No. 208; two very good miniatures by Staigg and a drawing of a child's head by the same, exquisitely felt; a portrait drawing in water-color, of a lady, by Miss Freeman, spirited and characteristic though morbid in color. Colyer's drawings this year, we are sorry to see, betray serious short-comings, a carelessness in drawing and superficiality which look like decline.

One word, as to our criticisms, and we have done. The only standard we are conscious of having raised, by which to measure the works in the exhibition, is that of *purpose*. We have demanded only, that the work should have some final object beyond picture making. For any man who has a truth to tell and capacity to tell it, we have all sympathy, whether we like the thing told or not—but for one who sits down to cover a canvas, with no feeling but how he may make his work most agreeable and attractive, we have no more artistic sympathy than we have with designers of carpets and paper-hangings—not so much, indeed, for they make no pretensions. If, from this standard, we have done any injustice, we are ready and desirous to make the most ample amends in our power.

## Architecture.

Our government is expending millions of dollars annually, on the extension of its present buildings at Washington, and the erection of new Custom-houses, Post-offices, &c., from one end of the country to the other. Various states are enlarging their capitals or building new ones. The older cities find their city halls inadequate to their present wants; and new buildings of this kind are in planning on a noble scale, while churches of no mean pretension, extensive educational and charitable institutions, sumptuous buildings for business, and palatial residences are constantly adding character and interest to their several localities.

Most of these works will, doubtless, stand for ages, and become to future generations the unvarying exponents of our wealth, pretension and taste. Let us not, therefore, have it said, we build beyond our knowledge of the art, and that not one in ten of our architectural monuments will stand the test of enlightened criticism. Our buildings, generally, are not characterized by expression of purpose, honest construction or artistic decoration. Of this latter subject however, we shall speak more at length, at another time.

The fact, however, is an apparent one, and is accounted for, in our unparalleled prosperity as a nation—the rapid accumulation of individual fortunes, and the natural gratification of ambitious desires, without the guidance of a cultivated taste.

It is not surprising that such should be the case, since we have not yet realized a half century's growth in the arts of peace, and the useful must always precede the ornamental.

As yet, however, not the least effort has been made towards affording educational facilities to the student of architecture. Our public schools give instruction in all the common branches of education, and our colleges and universities supply the professions of law, theology, medicine and engineering, the advantages required for entering those departments. But architecture, the profession that builds our temples to religion and commerce, and fashions our dwelling places—the profession which spends our money by millions, yearly, and gives us in return, monuments to please or annoy us as long as we live, and proclaim to coming generations through their tastelessness or deformity, *our* ability and intelligence—a profession of this importance, has no foot-hold in any educational institution in the country.

An architect with us, is too often a kind of chance production. The period when he arrives at that distinction, is only known to himself or the public, when he puts forth his "shingle" or professional "card." He may have been a successful or disappointed builder, a draughtsman (you cannot say student) in some architect's office for a year or two, or a stranger, who has come to this country as to "a field of missionary enterprise," with more confidence than professional accomplishment, or with more knowledge of details than of general principles. If he gets commissions, he commences experimenting at the expense of "somebody," and his buildings not unfrequently stand as the monuments of his client's prodigality, and his own imbecility.

It is to be regretted that some buildings do stand. We believe, that the sacrifice of time and money in the erection of sham clear—stories, groined ceilings of "lath and plaster," monstrous wood cornices with consols and brackets, &c., *put on*, and then made to counterfeit sandstone or marble—the building of tall spires of white pine, made to imitate Connecticut freestone, and the grossly absurd decoration usually palmed off as "fresco," and all similar architectural tricks and cheats, to be wrong, undeniably wrong, criminal, wicked. Why such things are longer tolerated by the public, we are at a loss to comprehend!

We do not speak unadvisedly on this subject. We have learned to appreciate good architecture when we see it, by the severe experience endured by one who strives to produce such, and while we deplore much of the present taste shown in our buildings, especially that marked by the unreal and metricious, there are some buildings in various sections of the country, characterized by sterling good taste; built in a noble spirit of honest sincerity and suited to the name and place. Such works as these already obtained, lead us to hope much for American architecture. Indeed, we think the time is not far distant, when architecture

shall become a department in our education, when a different sentiment will prevail, and the profession will be represented by a union of intelligence, practical sense and art culture, worthy of its importance.

We must remember, that it required more than fifty years to produce an Ictinus in Grecian, or a William of Wyckham in Christian, architecture, and we do not, in these articles, regard architecture from that high artistic point of view, in which Gothic architecture was conceived and perfected—for in that light it has no existence among us. It is not as Art, but as building that we judge it—for its fitness of purpose and general impressiveness, and not for any thought or idea to be given by it. To require these, would be to shut out nearly or quite all the public buildings in America. Let this be understood.

## THE PUBLIC BUILDINGS OF WASHINGTON.

THE CAPITOL.—To stand in the Place de la Concorde, Paris, facing the Tuileries, and behold the Madeleine on the left, the Chamber of Deputies on the right, and then turning to the Arc de Triomphe, which terminates the vista in front of the Palace, is to witness the grandest effect of genius and power of monumental art: such a scene is without a parallel, and when once beheld, can never be forgotten.

But for commanding position, for quiet dignity and grandeur, and fitness, as well as serenity and elegance of detail in the exterior of a single building, the United States' capitol, before the new wings were added, had not an equal in all the monuments of civil architecture. Every one who has been in Washington, must remember the prominence of this building from all parts of the city, and especially from the western portion, near the Smithsonian Institution, where its conscious greatness and majesty seem most impressive.

It is, indeed, remarkable, that one of our earliest public buildings, though it falls far short of being a work of art, should possess such excellence.

It was designed by P. H. Latrobe, an educated French architect, who came to this country in anticipation of government commissions.

The exterior of this building embraces the chief merits of the work. While its position is so commanding, its grand western approach and splendid colonnade so effective, its eastern portico so dignified and yet so appropriate, its details so chaste, its whole so harmonious, its interior is ill contrived and very meagre in treatment.

It is a great disappointment after studying this fine exterior, to go inside and grope along the gloomy passageways—find a representative hall wholly unsuited to speaking, although modelled after the chamber of deputies, and a senate chamber of a form worse than commonplace in its treatment. The rotunda or circular hall, was intended to be the principal feature of the interior, but it is deficient in height and poverty-stricken in its decoration. Had the dome of the rotunda extended up to the outer or mock-dome, the proportion would have been perfect. We need not, however, dwell upon the building as it was, when it possessed ample accommodations for the infant Republic.

The wings now approaching completion, which more than double the accommodations of the original building, bear evidence of our national growth, and our ability to meet the demands of the times—at least, as far as the expense is concerned.

The new Representatives' Hall will be in the south wing, and the Senate Chamber will be in the north wing. Both are parallelograms in form. They will be lighted through the ceilings and heated and ventilated by mechanical power—a good plan in theory perhaps; but, even that has never been satisfactorily demonstrated, notwithstanding more than fifty thousand pounds have been expended in the attempt in the new Houses of Parliament. It would have been quite as rational to have placed these rooms against the external wall, and thus secured as much of the light and air of heaven as possible. The warmth and cheerfulness thus obtained in the south wing in winter, and the fresh air in summer, would be of great importance, especially if the forcing engine should break down some day, and the members should have to endure their speeches in the "cock-pit," as an honorable senator calls it, without heat or fresh air.

These Halls are surrounded by ante-rooms, reception-rooms, committee-rooms, corridors, and stairways, and in these many rich and well studied effects will be produced.

It is to the spirit and mode of treatment in these extensions, however, we would call attention. The old building is of sandstone, painted white; the wings are of finest marble: the workmanship is the very best. The massive walls, the intricate brick vaulting, or the perfectly fire-proof floors, made by the wrought-iron beams—all excite our admiration, for there is an expression of purpose about them: they defy time and the elements. In the old building, we have said, a beauty of harmony prevails throughout the exterior; from the general outlines down to the remotest detail, Roman architecture is there seen, with a classic beauty of detail rarely excelled. Corresponding to the fine windows of the old building with their pure details of moldings, consols, caps, and enrichment, we see windows in the extension with architraves of romanesque and Grecian moldings, mixed enrichment in the same console, and a pediment cap, in pure Grecian design. On one side of a corner may be seen unmercifully crowded windows with pilasters, and on the other side, windows with architraves. The pilasters of the vestibule, and the entrance doorway, show a mingling of the Grecian and romanesque styles, wholly inexcusable.

How far this spirit of conglomeration is to prevail in the finishing of the interior, remains to be seen. We have judged only of what we have inspected, and we appeal to every man of common sense and to every truth-loving artist, if this jumbling of styles in the same building is not unpardonable? What possible reason can there be for it? Why depart from the style of that grand central building? Why not have harmony and unity of design, as far as practicable, in the whole work, when completed?

He who could listen to the braying band at Barnum's, and perceive no note of discord, or pass from the "Sketch Book" to "Latter Day Pamphlets," without observing

any difference of style, would not appreciate the whole force of our criticism. There are those, however, who have some discrimination in architecture.

The extension recently made to the Massachusetts State House, might be referred to as a case in point. Here the new portion has been designed in the spirit and style of the original building. The extension, in the only portion we have seen, shows that great care and study must have been given, in order to secure a unity and harmony of the whole. This should have been the case with our national Capitol.

But it is not enough to have incongruity and discord between the wings and the central building. The grandly beautiful dome is to be supplanted by one of greater height—greater pretension. We have seen the design, and do not hesitate to say that it will be a great mistake to build such a dome as the one designed, on such a base of building as the Capitol will be, when completed. The construction of the new dome is a violation of the true principles of design. Iron is to be used in precisely the same form of construction as if it were stone; of course, the pillars will be cast hollow, and they will be painted to imitate the marble. The extreme height of the dome, as it is to be, for it is piled up with range of pillars above range, and elevated as much as possible, will make violence in the general outline of the mass. When horizontal lines prevail in the style of a building and in the building proper, as will be the case in this instance, no part or feature should destroy that repose, for therein dwells its beauty.

No! Mr. Thomas U. Walter will make a great mistake, if he attempts to rear upon this long line of building a dome of the greatest possible height, in order to gratify individual caprice or personal ambition.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### ITALY IN 1855—1856.

Rome, 9th January, 1856.

Three days ago, the old Prince Corsini died, and to-day his body has been lying in state in the great palace of his family. It was in this palace that Christina, the Queen of Sweden and the daughter of Gustavus Adolphus died.

To-day, the doors have been open, and every one who desired has been admitted to see the state apartments and the dead Prince. All sorts of persons have been going up the magnificent double stairway—ladies and gentlemen—poor women with their babies in their arms—priests—soldiers—ragged workmen—boys and girls, and strangers of all kinds. There were no signs of mourning about the house, but in the first great saloon sat two men in black gowns, busily employed in writing, as if making inventories; and in each of the next two rooms were two priests in their showy robes, performing separate masses, while many people knelt on the floors, and others streamed through to the apartment in which the corpse was laid out. Here, on a black and yellow carpet,

in the middle of the floor, surrounded by benches which were covered with a black cloth on which was a faded yellow pattern of a skeleton with a scythe, lay the body of the old man. He was eighty-nine years old, but here was nothing of the dignity of age, or the repose of death. The corpse was dressed in full court-costume: in a bright-blue coat, with gold laces and borders upon the breast, white silk stockings, and varnished pumps. It had on a wig, and its lips and cheeks were rouged. At its feet and at its head was a candle burning; two hired mourners sat at each side, and two soldiers kept the crowd from pressing too near or lingering too long. The room which was not darkened, was hung with damask of purple and gold, and the high ceiling was painted with gay frescoes of some story of the gods. If the mockery of all that is solemn and affecting in death had not been so shocking, the scene might have been ludicrous from its incongruities between the show and the reality. It was the chamber of death set out like Madame Tussaud's wax-work. It was the body of a decrepid old man made a show of for idle curiosity, and the amusement of children. It was a scene fit for the grave-digger's grim jokes, and Hamlet's sad philosophy.

Prince Corsini had held the office of the Senator of Rome, and many years ago, at the time of his election, the lions of the Capitol and the Barberini Triton had spouted wine instead of water, as when Rienzi was made Tribune, but his name will hardly be remembered by another generation.

The palace had that air of incomplete magnificence and partial neglect which belongs to so many of the palaces of Rome, and of the South. There were statues in the halls, but the tiled floors were coarse and damp, the large windows were filled with rattling and dim glass. Painted wooden columns were set up opposite marble ones. The beautiful garden, stretching behind the palace toward the Janiculum, had been left to decay. Its iron gate was rusted, its regular walks over-grown with mold and green moss. Its trimmed alleys, arched over with myrtles, were weedy, and dark and damp. Everything wore a look of decline, and the sentiment of the place was that belonging to decaying splendor and neglected beauty.

In the evening a showy funeral procession, with carriages, and long trains of priests with candles and chanting, accompanied the body of the prince to the church of St. John Lateran, where, in the gorgeous family chapel, it was once more laid in state as a show for indifferent spectators. His servants for the last time rouged the wrinkled cheeks, and arranged the dyed moustaches, and then left the body to the care of the priests who sat drowsily reading their services over it. The chapel itself was not brilliantly lighted, though it appeared so by contrast with the rest of the church. A few candles were burning at the high altar, but their rays were soon scattered in the immense spaces of the nave and aisles. Now and then, some attendant, with a candle in his hand, passed across, his light making the surrounding darkness darker, and the distance more obscure. In this dimness, the vastness of the church became far more impressive than in the